

**REGULAR MEETING OF
BELMONT REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

Tuesday, August 10, 2004

CALL TO ORDER 7:50 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Directors Present: Mathewson, Warden, Feierbach, Bauer, Metropulos

Directors Absent: None

Staff Present: Acting City Manager Rich, City Attorney Savaree, Community Development Director Ewing, Public Works Director Davis, Agency Secretary Cook.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Director Mathewson requested the removal of Item 4-B (Resolution Approving a Modification to the Existing Homebuyers Assistance Program) be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate consideration.

ITEMS APPROVED ON THE CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2004.

Action: On a motion by Director Warden, seconded by Director Mathewson, the Consent Calendar, as amended, was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION:

Resolution Approving a Modification to the Existing Homebuyers Assistance Program

Director Mathewson stated that he would like this program to be beneficial to more people. He suggested increasing the down payment requirement from three percent to five percent, and recommended that the available area be expanded to include R-3 and R-4 zones outside the Redevelopment Agency.

Principal Planner de Melo stated that changes were made to the program since 1996 that expanded the area of the program. He noted that the bulk of loans have been made in the Redevelopment area, with two outside the Agency boundaries. He commented that interest rates and home price are major factors in the use of the program, and clarified that condominiums qualify.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that she supported the higher down payment recommendation. She suggested using the money first in the RDA, and leftover funds could be utilized in other zoning areas as suggested by Councilmember Mathewson. Principal Planner de Melo responded that the rules should be set forth at the outset. He also clarified that the process for working through the County of San Mateo has been rectified. He noted that an attractive program should be created, since it is being under-utilized at this time.

In response to Director Mathewson, Principal Planner de Melo reviewed similar programs in other cities. He noted that the down payment and closing costs requirements for these other cities average five percent, which is what is being recommended for Belmont.

Director Warden stated that he supported the requirement for a minimum five percent down payment plus closing costs. He also stated that the maximum loan amount should be \$100,000, and the total subsidy should not be more than 15 percent of the total purchase price. He supported the terms as outlined, as well as the use of this program outside the Redevelopment Agency.

Director Bauer agreed with Director Warden, and stated that it was desirable for more people to be able to use this program.

Discussion ensued regarding loan amounts, down payments, and closing costs. Principal Planner de Melo clarified that a six-month trial period could be initiated, after which time the Agency could review and make changes to the program, if desired. He also clarified that a modified resolution would be prepared for approval at a subsequent meeting.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Economic Development Implementation Plan (RDA Administration and Capital Spending Plans)

Acting City Manager Rich reported that the implementation of the Economic Development Plan is complex, and the goal is to maximize resources to the desired efforts. He noted that the Plan has two components: Capital Projects and Administrative Initiatives. He reviewed the recent Visioning Project effort, which culminated in the Economic Summit in January. He also reviewed the April 2004 Economic Development and Financing Options Report, which proposed a number of economic development themes.

Acting City Manager Rich stated that just under \$6 million was available for various capital project categories identified as priorities during the next five years. He clarified that \$3.9 million was budgeted, with the remainder as an undesignated fund balance. He reviewed the façade program, and stated that a contract with the Chamber of Commerce could help promote and implement this under-utilized program. He noted that programs such as low-to-moderate income housing and ERAF were State-driven, but that the Agency had flexibility with other programs such as street projects.

Acting City Manager Rich reviewed the administrative activities and the options for implementation. He noted that code enforcement plays a role in this component of the Plan, and that 25 percent of those activities are committed to the Redevelopment area.

He reviewed the options for a proposed Economic Development Coordinator for the City of Belmont, and noted that this could be a part- or full-time position, and could be a City or a contract employee. He noted that the Chamber of Commerce had submitted a proposal for accomplishing the various programs outlined for this position. He reviewed funding options. He noted that the current Coordinator job description should be updated and modified as necessary.

Mary Morrissey-Parden, President, Belmont Chamber of Commerce, stated that it was important for the Chamber and the City to work in partnership for opportunities in economic development. (Written comments on file in Clerk's office.) She reviewed recent Chamber activities, including the second-annual Community Faire, the new web site, the "Look Good Feel Good Showcase", the economic development forum, and the annual holiday fundraiser. She stated that the Chamber understands the need to match available resources with priorities. She added that the Chamber supports the outsourcing of a number of activities, and noted that the Chamber is available to pursue any the Council desires.

Chester Fisher, Belmont Chamber of Commerce, stated that the role of the Chamber of Commerce was not only to promote Belmont for business purposes, but also to maintain dialog with the City. He stated that the Chamber welcomes and can evaluate new ideas. He clarified that the Chamber needs resources to accomplish common goals and objectives.

Director Feierbach stated that she supports the Economic Development Director being a City employee as opposed to a contracted position. She would like the Council to participate in developing the criteria for hiring. She noted that whoever is employed in this position will need to interface with other cities, especially relative to plans for the El Camino. She added that Belmont needs a proactive Director.

In response to Director Bauer's questions regarding specific items proposed by the Chamber of Commerce, **Mary Morrissey-Parden** explained that an Economic Development Advisory Committee could be coordinated by the Chamber to provide outreach to nonmembers. The Chamber could encourage businesses to locate in Belmont, and could provide a tool for location and relocation services, as well as assist with community events and marketing of Belmont.

Director Warden stated that he supports having a full-time Economic Development Director (EDD) who would report directly to the City Manager, and he also supports funding for the Chamber of Commerce. He noted that a professional EDD could assess programs and help direct the City's economic plan. He noted there is value in all the programs outlined. He also stated that he would support appointing a subcommittee to review the Chamber's proposal to assist the Council with reaching consensus on some of the programs outlined.

Director Mathewson stated that previous to tonight's discussion he had questioned the need and approach for an Economic Development Director. He met with an EDD in a neighboring city, and now supports an in-house EDD for guidance on the economic plan. He also supports the Chamber of Commerce's funding, and would like to undertake some of the projects soon.

Chair Metropulos stated that he supports a full-time Economic Development Director as well as funding for the Chamber of Commerce. He also would support a subcommittee to fast-track some of the programs.

Discussion ensued regarding the desired qualities and skill sets for an Economic Development Director, and the recruitment process.

Mary Morrissey Parden, Belmont Chamber of Commerce, noted that the Farmer's Market was a product of the Chamber of Commerce, not the previous Economic Development Director. She stated that financial needs of the Chamber from the City ranged between \$45,000 to \$66,000, which represents various staffing levels. The Chamber is aware that resources would not be available for the same level of assistance from the City as in prior years, and she clarified that the Chamber usually receives less than the requested amount.

Director Warden suggested that a subcommittee be formed to analyze the details of the Chamber of Commerce's proposal, and to make recommendations for future implementation. He added that he would be interested in serving on the subcommittee, and stated his support for the basic funding of the Chamber.

Director Mathewson stated he would be willing to serve on the subcommittee as well.

Action: On a motion by Director Warden, seconded by Director Feierbach, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to hire a full-time Economic Development Director who will report to the City Manager, to provide \$66,000 funding to the Chamber of Commerce for basic services, and to form a subcommittee of two Councilmembers (Warden/Mathewson), the City Manager, and Finance Director regarding details of the Chamber of Commerce proposal for other services.

Acting City Manager Rich clarified that the \$66,000 funding to the Chamber of Commerce was the net amount for the current fiscal year.

Finance Director Fil suggested that the subcommittee also review the façade program.

Action: On a motion by Director Feierbach, seconded by Director Warden, and unanimously approved by a show of hands to implement the Economic Development Capital Program and Administrative Plan.

ADJOURNMENT at this time being 9:26 P.M.

Meeting tape-recorded and videotaped Terri Cook

Tape No. 587 Agency Secretary